

Our

GENEALOGY Keystone Families

By Schuyler C. Brossman

Column No. 206

In the columns of the last few weeks the subject of meager information on tombstones was covered. It was pointed out how frustrating it is to find a tombstone which may be of an ancestor, but not enough data is included in the inscription to make the identification complete.

While visiting various cemeteries in the area, all within a half hour's drive from my home, I have copied inscriptions which are a delight to genealogists, as they give so much information. Anyone finding such an inscription of any of his ancestors is truly lucky.

Not only are the dates of birth and death fully given, but in some cases the names of the spouse, number of children, marriage date, and even the names of the second and third wives, or husbands.

Other information, which is sometimes given, includes place of birth and-or death, occupation, military service and additional facts which are nearly a biography of the deceased. Sometimes the cause of death is even given on the stone.

These inscriptions which follow are only a sample of what one may expect to find on these old German stones of years ago. There are thousands and thousands of stones with a wealth of information in this southeast part of Pennsylvania. The next time you have an opportunity to visit an old Pennsylvania German cemetery, spend a little time searching for these extraordinary stones. The stones are mostly in German, but some are in English. It is not unusual to find the grave of the spouse who died first,

marked by a German stone, while the one who died afterwards is in English, especially if a period of some years elapsed.

I realize I have some advantage over some of the readers of this column in that I can usually read the German stones and translate them. Any reader who wishes me to translate a stone, should take a picture of the stone, from a distance of about three or four feet. If they will send me the picture, and a stamped self-addressed envelope, I will try to translate it and then send it back to them. The picture should be taken around noon time while the shadows are in the inscription, which will make the inscription stand out in the picture. Sometimes the inscriptions can be read better from a picture than in the cemetery. There will be no charge for doing this, if there are not too many, but I would like a copy of the picture, if available, for my files.

Genealogists and historians who find tombstones with the type of inscriptions which follow, will realize they have found a wealth of information of their subjects.

Host Church, Berks Co., Pa.

Christoffel Liess, born in the year 1751, married Maria Elisabeth Trautman, had one son and six daughters. Married the second time Catharina Schaefer. Married the third time Catharina Stener and died June 9, 1826. Buried next to him is Elisabeth Liess, wife of Cristofel, Liess, nee Trautman, b. Aug. 12, 1749, d. Dec. 9, 1812. Daniel Wolf, son of Georg Wolf and wife Appolona, nee Meier, born in Europe in Oberhost, Mar 9 1742, d. Apr 2, 1829. (Has Rev. War marker on

grave)

Wilhelm Stoy, preacher and minister of the Word of God, born in Narauischen, in Herborn the 18th March 1726. Came to this country 1742 (should read 1752). Lived in Holy Matrimony with Maria Elisabeth Mausin, 44 years. Had nine children, died Sept 14, 1801.

Arthur Schuman, who copied many tombstones inscriptions in his lifetime, which may be seen at the Historical Society of Berks County, had this to say about the Rev. Mr. Stoy: "He died in Lebanon and was buried at his own request at St. John's Church of Host. He preached at this church up until the time of his death. The last of his family was an aged daughter who died in 1857 in Pittsburgh, Pa. About the same time there were two catechumens living at Host whom he had confirmed. People living remembered seeing his grey clothes. He had a prejudice against black clothes. He was also the first here to vaccinate against small pox, also discovered an effective cure for hydrophobia and prepared a family medicine, which received great favor, known as "Stoy Drops."

On the second part of the cemetery are the graves of two soldiers of the Civil War. Both men served in Co. H, 151st Pennsylvania Volunteers. What is fascinating about these two young soldiers is that their names were carried seccessively on the company roster and are now buried side by side, together in death, as they were in life.

Their inscriptions read: "William, son of Samuel and Rebecca Loeb, born 15 October 1840, died while a volunteer in 151st P.V. at Alexandra, Va. on 27 June 1863, age, 22 y. 8 m. 12 d." and "Mandon W. Leiss, son of David and Anna Leiss, born 24 May 1843, died as a volunteer in 151st Reg. P.V. at Belle Plain, Va. 18 April 1863, aged 19 y 10 m 24 d."

Gernant's Church Cemetery Near Leesport, Pa.

In this cemetery is a tombstone with the following inscription: "Erected by his friends as a tribute to the memory of Lieut. William Herbst who served in the Mexican War from 1846 to 1848 and as a Lieut. of Comp E, 50 Regt. Penn. Vol. during the Rebellion from 1861 to 1864, born October 25, 1822, married to Cath. Consor, died in Knoxville, N.Y. August 1, 1865, aged 42 y 9 m 6 d."

In the same cemetery: "Cyrus M. Moser, born 7 Nov 1850, killed in a railroad wreck at

Cummings, Missouri, 22 Apr 1892 — 41 y 5 m 15 d." This gives a clue of a lead to follow in the newspapers of that place about the wreck. If he were my ancestor I would want to know why he was out there, so far from home, who were his family, and many other answers. Maybe it would be possible to get a photocopy of a newspaper account of the wreck from the public library of Cummings, if one wrote to that place.

(Continued Next Week) Reunion

The annual Ness Reunion will be held on Sept. 20, rain or shine, in Gleaner's Grove, near Leader's Heights, York, Pa. This will be in commemoration of the 239th Anniversary of the Ness's in America. Donald A. Boyer, historian, 990 East Philadelphia St., York, Pa. 17403. They have a 179 foot chart of the 239th Anniversary of the America.

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